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051347Z May 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 002588

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

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Schroeder Urges Turkey to Continue Moving on EU Road -Vatan
Schroeder: EU Must Keep Aid Pledge to North Cyprus -
Milliyet
Suicide Attack in Erbil: 60 Killed - Hurriyet
Massacre in Erbil: 60 Killed, 150 Injured - Milliyet
Blair Asks British Voters to Leave Behind Iraq Issue - Vatan
Al-Qaeda's No. 3 Man Caught - Hurriyet
Bin-Ladin's 'Plotter,' al-Libbi, Arrested - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

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Zaman
Bloodbath in Erbil: 60 Killed - Radikal
Gul Offers Condolences to Barzani On Erbil Bombing - Zaman
General Myers: New War Would Be Difficult for US -
Cumhuriyet
IMF's Krueger: Turkey a Successful Reformer - Yeni Safak
Muslims Key in British Elections - Yeni Safak
Britain Moves Toward Third Term With Blair - Cumhuriyet
Labor Runs to Third Victory, Tories Face Historic Defeat -
Radikal
Ivanov: Russia Working on New Weapons Systems - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Gul on Incirlik Airbase, Iraq: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul Wednesday briefed members of the parliament's foreign affairs, EU adaptation, and human rights committees on a number of recent current policy issues. The AKP government's decision on expanded US access to Incirlik Airbase for logistical support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan 'is in Turkey's interest,' Gul said. He expressed concern about the negative depiction of Turkey's relations with the US. Gul denied there had been a 'secret agreement' with the US on Incirlik. 'The US was not given a blank check,' he added. Gul repeated that the base will be used within the framework of UN and NATO decisions. He stressed that there will be no transfer of weapons, ammunition, or combat troops through Incirlik as a result of this decision. Gul said that 'chaos' was likely in the event of a US pullout from Iraq. 'Such a withdrawal would bring the partition of Iraq, and would jeopardize Turkey's security,' Gul said. FM Gul also noted that Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Israel and Palestine had been timely and important.

Gul Calls Barzani Over Suicide Attack in Erbil: Ankara on Wednesday strongly condemned the suicide attack against the KDP office in Erbil, Northern Iraq. The attack claimed 60 lives. Foreign Minister Gul called KDP leader Barzani to extend condolences for the victims. He offered to send medical help for those who were injured in the blast. Barzani thanked Gul for his 'brotherly attitude.' The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) released a written statement condemning the bombing.

Schroeder Visits Turkey: German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder told the Turkish-German Economic Congress on Wednesday that Turkey should maintain the political will to continue sweeping EU reforms. Economic reforms facilitated the implementation of political reforms in Turkey, Schroeder told the bilateral forum meetings held in Istanbul. He suggested the inclusion of northern Cyprus in tourism and agriculture exchanges between Turkey and Germany. 'Germany and Turkey should work together to bring prosperity to Turkish Cyprus,' Schroeder emphasized. The German Chancellor voiced support for PM Erdogan's proposal to form a joint committee of Turkish and Armenian historians to

examine 'genocide' claims, and urged Turkey to open its border crossing with Armenia. Prime Minister Erdogan vowed that Turkey would expand its Customs Union agreement with the EU to include new member states, including Cyprus, before entry talks in early October. Erdogan stressed that EU membership continues to be Turkey's foreign policy priority. Erdogan praised the level of economic cooperation between Ankara and Berlin, saying that 60,000 Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany had made investments of over 4 billion Euro and created jobs for 300,000 people there. The PM noted that Germany is Turkey's leading trade partner and foreign investor, adding that trade between the two countries exceeded 21 billion USD in 2004. Erdogan also urged Schroeder to encourage German companies to join Turkish entrepreneurs working in third countries, including in Iraq. Earlier Wednesday, Chancellor Schroeder was awarded an honorary doctorate by Istanbul's Marmara University. He also called on Patriarch Bartholomew. Schroeder said after visiting the Patriarchate that the 'Ecumenical' Patriarch Bartholomew is hopeful for Turkey's reform process. 'The situation of non-Muslims in Turkey is very important for us,' Schroeder said. Responding to a question on the reopening of Halki Seminary, Schroeder said the issue had not been raised during his official meetings, and that it required 'further patience.'

Police Arrest Terrorists Preparing for Bomb Attacks in Cities: Turkish police detained two suspects with alleged ties to the outlawed PKK in coordinated operations in Istanbul and the Mediterranean city of Antalya, papers report. Police seized 7.5 kg of plastic explosives belonging to the suspects. A statement by Istanbul police said the two detainees had received military training in rural parts of the country and had been planning to carry out bomb attacks in urban areas. Police also seized electrical fuses, fake identity cards, and diagrams on bomb manufacturing.

Aydin: Halki Seminary May Be Opened: State Minister Mehmet Aydin said the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary in Istanbul could be reopened, but only if it abides by domestic laws and regulations on education in Turkey. 'We cannot grant a privileged status to a single school,' Aydin said. He stressed that the Turkish government does not object to the reopening of the seminary, noting that Turkey will not interfere with the beliefs of its Greek Orthodox nationals.

Erdogan, Kocharyan to Meet in Warsaw: Armenian President Kocharyan and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan are to meet in Warsaw May 17, "Vatan" reports, based on contacts with Armenian foreign ministry officials.

Turkey-Israel Overcome Tank Modernization Disagreement: Turkey and Israel have resolved a crisis on the modernization of the Turkish military's M-60 tanks by Israel's IAI company, "Yeni Safak" reports. IAI was scheduled to finish modernization of 180 tanks first, but failed to complete the necessary tests within the time limits set by the project agreement. Shortly before Erdogan's visit to Israel, the two sides agreed to rearrange the periods for testing of tanks. The modernization project will cost Turkey 600 million USD.

Gul Due in Kyrgyzstan: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will leave for Kyrgyzstan on Thursday to meet prime minister Bakiyev, parliament speaker Tekebayev and foreign minister Otunbayeva, the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement yesterday. Gul will reportedly take 2.5 ton of humanitarian aid to Kyrgyzstan.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Turkish Foreign Policy; Turkey's Role in the Middle East

"An Unstable Policy"

Cuneyt Ulsever observed in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (5/5): "The biggest mistake any administrator can make is to bring his organization to the point where it becomes unpredictable. Administrators with unpredictable behavior cause stress for those around them. When people do not see the next step that is coming, they react angrily. The mismanagement of the Erdogan government has created this kind of stress and anger in both domestic and international circles. Even when they give very warm messages to various parties, they are still viewed with suspicion. So when Erdogan presented the most pro-American speech of his administration at his party group meeting on April 27, he was unable to reduce the skepticism among US officials. The confusion is the result of the government's effort to follow two contradictory roadmaps at the same time. Like every other government in the world, the Turkish government is pushed by the views of its grassroots as well as the need to engage in realistic policies. But the AKP's grass-roots are centered around the 'national view' ('milli gorus') mentality. This world view inevitably comes into conflict with the need for a realistic foreign policy. For example,

the US was one of the factors that helped bring the AKP to power. But the grassroots of the party dislike the US. The government's 'solution' lay in the idea of 'strategic depth' in foreign policy. But when a multi-faceted foreign policy tries to solve each issue independently of the others, it becomes nothing more than a cacophony that no one can understand. While the Prime Minister's office was trying to follow this kind of foreign policy, experts at the Foreign Ministry have been completely left out. Turkish Ambassadors in the most important countries are very upset about this. Let us look for a moment at the results of this policy: 'The US is upset with PM Erdogan. This has to be resolved. Turkey cannot manage without the US. Israel is annoyed with the PM as well. What to do? As a start, Erdogan gives a speech praising the US. Then he arranges a visit to Israel. But, how can he explain all of this to the anti-Israeli group that forms a large part of his political base? He says that it is all about an effort to mediate between Israel and Palestine. Israel hosted Erdogan very kindly, but the Israelis openly rejected his offer to play the role of mediator. Erdogan was also late for his appointment with the Palestinian PM, so the Palestinians were also very upset. The result? Neither Israel, nor the Palestinians, nor the rest of the Arab world could understand the purpose of this visit.'

"Turkey is Beating A Dead Horse in the Middle East"

Semih Idiz commented in the mainstream-opposition "Milliyet" (5/5): "When the Israeli Foreign Minister kindly rejected Turkey's offer of mediation, some of us felt hurt, as if this was an action against Turkey. Yet the situation in the region should be viewed carefully. There is already a very important mediator between Israel and Palestine -- the United States. Although many Arab countries and some Palestinians - including the late Yasser Arafat -- consider Washington a supporter of Israel, no Palestinian officials have ever given up on Washington's mediating role.

Moreover, whatever progress has been made over the years in Israeli-Palestinian relations was made as the result of US initiatives. At some point, Norway acted as a mediator. But there is a lesson for Turkey from that period as well. Norway did not announce its role until some results came out of the process. But Turkey is announcing its offer to the world by beating drums. When the offer is rejected kindly, it is then considered an insult for Turkey. As former Foreign Minister Ismail Cem has suggested, why couldn't Turkey act as a kind of facilitator instead of a mediator?

In fact, Turkey is already playing the role of a facilitator. Last week's meeting of Turkish, Israeli, and Palestinian businessmen sponsored by Turkey's Union of Chambers (TOBB) in Ankara was an example of what Turkey can do. But if there are still some in Turkey who are thinking that it would look better in the media if Turkey were a true mediator in the Middle East, then I'm afraid they are doing nothing more than beating a dead horse."

EDELMAN